

## The Woman Anoints Jesus' Feet

Pastor Kent Priebe

Luke 7:36-50 tells the story of two very different people interacting with Jesus. Both were seeking Jesus, both knew some things about Jesus, and on the same night around the same dinner table they both had very personal interactions with Jesus. These two people were different in almost every way – yet both were actively seeking Jesus. They had different understandings of who Jesus is. And the result is one left transformed and changed by Jesus; tragically the other left unchanged.

Simon was a Pharisee, one of a group who as a whole were violently opposed to Jesus. Simon invited Jesus to dinner, indicating that he wanted to know Jesus better. Inviting Jesus to dinner meant he was ready to brave the ridicule from his fellow Pharisees, family and friends. Simon was a serious spiritual seeker.

The woman was sinful, a prostitute. She came with her an alabaster jar of perfume and with a plan. She too was a serious seeker.

When the woman approached Jesus, she started to cry and weep, and her tears fell on Jesus' feet. Then she knelt down, let her hair down, wiped her tears from Jesus' feet with her hair, kissed his feet, and poured perfume on his feet. She did what she had prepared to do.

Both Simon and the woman wanted an encounter with Jesus, but they approached Him differently.

Simon's approach to Jesus was intellectual and rational, detached and impersonal. Simon approached Jesus with his head and his thinking rather than his heart. Simon saw Jesus as a prophet and teacher and wanted to learn from Him, but Simon excluded the most important thing. Simon was not thinking about loving Jesus with the affections of his heart. Simon wasn't interested in Jesus changing him. Simon didn't want to change his goals, his position, his vocation or his ambitions.

In contrast to Simon, the woman approached Jesus personally and emotionally, holding nothing back. Knowing her sin, she came to Jesus anyway, with tears, with her emotions, with humility and generosity—with her whole life laid out in the open. She gave Jesus her most expensive possession, her alabaster jar. It wasn't just an extravagant act of generosity. She laid the tool of her trade at His feet, saying in effect, "I come to you without conditions. I give you all I have. I will live a wholly different life, dedicated to you."

This is the only true way to come to Jesus.

Jesus cared about Simon enough to confront him with his pride and self-righteousness by telling a parable. Jesus in effect said to Simon, "You and this woman are not so different. You both need forgiveness."

Jesus took the conversation even further, showing Simon that this woman had something that Simon didn't have. Jesus said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?" Simon had seen her – but only seen what was wrong with her, her sin. Three times Jesus compared Simon's actions to the woman's actions. Three times Jesus said, "Simon, you did not – but she did." And three times Jesus pointed out the great love and devotion that she showed Jesus.

Simon showed none of the same love, generosity, and devotion. In the end Jesus rebuked Simon. The woman's actions were evidence that she knew she needed a savior. In the end the woman received forgiveness of her sin, peace, and salvation. Simon got knowledge, teaching, a parable and a case study. Simon got what he wanted, but he could have had so much more if he had believed the truth about himself, and if he had approached Jesus as the woman did.

# sermon study guide

## IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your most prized possession? What makes it special?
2. What are you willing to give up for Jesus? Name one thing you might find hard to let go of.

## UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Luke 7:36-50.

3. Discuss the differences between Simon the Pharisee and the woman with the jar of perfume.
4. Implications: What did the woman give up when she broke her jar on Jesus' feet? What did Simon miss? Are there other implications?
5. Describe Jesus' appropriate response to each.

## OUT – PURSUE MISSION

6. Who are the seekers in your circle of friends? How can your group help you share Jesus with them?
7. What are you willing to give up to receive the life Jesus wants you to have?

### **For Personal Reflection / Prayer:**

*Are you more like Simon the Pharisee or the woman in your relationship with Jesus? Do you approach Jesus only with your heart or only with your mind? If you are like Simon, ask God what do you need to change or let go to have an authentic and deeper relationship with Jesus.*

### **THE WORD (NIV)**

#### **Luke 7:36-50**

<sup>36</sup> When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. <sup>38</sup> As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup> When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

<sup>41</sup> "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

<sup>44</sup> Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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